1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

177 not been complete, and that the hills have been invaded by strangers, especially from the side of the Wainad; but the isolation has probably been considerable, and, for long periods, it may have been complete.

101 177 In their isolation from the world in general, however, the Todas have not been alone. Two other tribes, the Kotas and the Badagas, occupy the plateau with them, and the peculiar relations between the three tribes are among the most interesting features of the social life of the Nilgiris. The Todas are a purely pastoral people, limiting their activities almost entirely to the care of their buffaloes and to the complicated ritual which has grown up in association with these animals. The Badagas are chiefly agriculturists; the Kotas are artisans and mechanics; and both supply the Todas with part of their produce. There is here a well-marked instance of division of labour, in which the labour of the Todas is reduced to a minimum. Their privileged position is usually held to be due to the tradition that they are the "lords of the soil," and the produce which the Todas receive from the other tribes is supposed to be of the nature of tribute.

The jungle on the slopes of the hills is inhabited by two wild, dwarfish tribes, the Kurumbas and Irulas, who have a general resemblance to the many other jungle tribes of Southern India. These people are much feared by the tribes of the plateau for their supposed magical powers, but they have little to do with the complex social life of the others.

101 ●131 177 The district in which the three tribes live is not extensive. The extreme length of the plateau, from east to west, is about forty-two miles, and its average breadth, from north to south, about ten miles, the maximum breadth being fifteen miles in the centre of the district. The total area of the plateau is less than 500 square miles. In this district there live about 800 Todas, 1,200 Kotas, and 34,000 Badagas. In addition, there are now extensive European settlements, the largest of which is Ootacamund, the seat of the Madras Government for six months of the year. The other large European settlements are Coonoor and Kotagiri, while Wellington, near Coonoor, is a military station.

The plateau of the Nilgiris is divided into four districts,

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

The plateau of the Nilgiris is divided into four districts, ordinarily known by the names, Todanad, Mekanad, Peranganad, and Kundanad, and these districts are recognised by the Todas. The Todanad is the largest district, and is the part where the majority of the Todas live. Their own name for it is Marsâdr. 101 103 131 162

The Mekanad is called by the Todas Karâdr, and is now very sparsely inhabited, though there are many old villages in the district.

The Peranganad is the eastern part of the hills, and is called by the Todas Purgòdr, and is the chief seat of a few of their clans.

The fourth district, or Kundanad, is that already mentioned as the Kundahs in the south-west part of the hills. It is the chief seat of one Toda clan, but it also contains villages belonging to others. It is especially visited in the dry season, since its large rainfall often provides ample pasturage when this is burnt up on other parts of the hills. The Toda name of the district is Mêdr.

A few Todas live near Gudalur in the Wainad, some 3,000 feet lower than the main plateau.

METHODS

The description of Toda life to be given in this book is the outcome of an attempt to apply rigorous methods in the investigation of sociology and religion. In the brief time which was at my disposal, it was essential to employ methods of investigation which would enable me to tell with some certainty whether I was obtaining accurate and trustworthy information. Two great sources of error in anthropological investigation are the dependence on the evidence of only a few individuals and the necessity of paying for information. 121 124

The first source of error was easily avoided, and I was able to obtain my information from a large body of witnesses, usually independently of one another. As regards the second source, the Todas are inveterate beggars, and are now thoroughly accustomed to receive payment for every service rendered to the European, even of the most trivial kind. Payment for information was inevitable, but I 124

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

remain in their pristine barbarous state; innocent even of written characters; and there are said to be several other minor dialects or corruptions belonging to small sylvan families holding unimportant geographical positions in the Drâvidian area.

Remnants of the ejected Kôls are shown on the eastern limits, and Âryanised peoples are closed in on the entire northern boundary.

The Rev. Dr. Pope, in his contribution to this book,[12] gives it as his opinion that the Toda language was originally old Kanarese, and not a distinct dialect. He thinks that the language has dwindled to a mere skeleton, as a result of isolation and consequent degeneration of the people.

The early Indian history of the Todas has been as completely lost as that of the long protracted period which preceded their migration to the Dekkan.

We know, indeed, with a tolerable degree of certainty, both from their own legends and from those of neighbouring tribes, that until the last few hundred years they inhabited a jungle tract of inferior hills situated between the Kanarese and Tamilian districts, in the direction of Hâsanûr; which, on E. longitude 77° 20′ and N. latitude 11° 45′ form portion of the Eastern Ghats. And that they then divided into two or more parts, of which one settled in a northerly direction, near Kôlegâll, and the other migrated or was driven in the direction of the Nilagiri Mountain;[13] the greater number

[12] Vide Chapter XXIX., 'Outlines of the Tuḍa Grammar.'

At the time of recording this opinion, Dr. Pope had not had opportunity of perusing any portion of my descriptions of Toda life. Had he done so, it is possible he might have modified his views. I, who judge the Todas physically and through their antique customs and practices, fail to discover any degeneracy in the people; rather regarding them as not only without evidence of having been better, but with little appearance of having been materially different from what they now are, within any period whose length may be fixed or even approximated.

[13] Mr. Metz, who obtained this information from the Todas, is my authority for this paragraph.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAP. I.

settling on its very topmost plateau, where we now find them, whilst a small remnant, winding behind its north-western slopes, remained on one of the lower plateaus, called the Wynâd.

This modern place of Toda residence is an isolated mountain, upwards of seven thousand feet above sea level, upreared on E. longitude 76° 45′ and N. latitude 11° 20′, amidst the plains of South India—the gigantic and sudden culmination of the minor mountain-chain system, called the Eastern and Western Ghats, which there meet.

These, their last movements, having been very small and of minor importance, I have included their past and their present places of residence in one area, marked VI. on the map.

Not only the summit of the Nilagiris, but the tops of the minor rounded eminences thereon, are studded with kairns, raised for the reception of ashes of the dead, by a race whose history has been so completely lost that not a tradition even of it remains. On the same plateau are also a few kromlechs, also many deserted circles of stones, situated near streams of running water; some manifestly constructed for pounding cattle, others, with equal certainty, not made for that purpose —being in exposed situations and having rocky beds.

These erections undoubtedly do not belong to the Todas, who not only do not regard them with reverence, but assert that they were of a people antecedent to themselves on the mountain. Moreover they are found in many parts of the Indian peninsula and of Western India. But I may do service in drawing attention to points in which the cremation customs of this unknown race are those of the Todas, and to those in which they differ from them.

In brief, we find, from relics exhumed from kairns, that their owners made use of the horse: that they practised agriculture, holding the buffalo in high esteem, and burying its bell with the manes of the deceased. We learn that they were acquainted with the use of the spear, bow and arrow:

3: Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Todas

p. 1

THE PRIMITIVE TRIBES OF THE NĪLAGIRIS.

CHAPTER I.

GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF THE NĪLAGIRIS—ALTITUDE AND GENERAL CHARACTER—SCENERY.—CLIMATE.—RAINFALL.—RECOGNISED GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS.—FIVE NATIVE TRIBES.—THE BADAGAS NOT ONE OF THE PRIMITIVE TRIBES.

The Nīlagiris* are a lofty range of mountains in Southern India situated between 11° 10′ and 11° 32′ North latitude and 76° 59′ and 77° 31′ East longitude.

They may be said to form an abutment on the great belt of mountains, which, under the name of the Western Ghâts, runs down the western side of the Peninsula, from the River Tapti to Cape Comorin. They are bounded on the north, partly by the territory of the native kingdom of Mysore, partly by Wainâd, the upland division of the Madras

* Nīlagiris means blue mountains, from nīla, blue, and giri, a mountain or hill; the common, but corrupt, spelling is Neilgherries. Accounts of these mountains and their inhabitants will be found in the following works:—

1826. *Letter to the Calcutta Harkaru, by Rev. James Hough.*
1827. *General and Medical Topography of the Neilgherries, by Dr. Young.*
1832. *The Todas, by Captain Harkness.*
1834. *Notes through Malabar and among the Neilgherries, by Captain Mignan.*
„ *Falls of Cauvery and Neilgherries, by Lieutenant Jervis.*
„ *Neilgherries, by Dr. Baikie.*
1835. *Geological Sketch of the Neilgherries, by Dr. P. M. Benza.*
1838. *Topographical Report of the Neilgherries, by Dr. De Burgh Birch.*
1844. *Antiquities of Neilgherries, by Captain Congreve. Vol. XIV., Madras Journal of Literature and Science.*
1847. *Memoir of the Neilgherries, by Captain J. Ouchterlony. Vol. XV., Part II., Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, 1848.
1851. *Goa and the Blue Mountains, by Lieutenant Burton.*
„ *Neilgherry Letters, by Captain Sir Francis Ford.*
1864. *The Tribes inhabiting the Neilgherry Hills, by Rev. F. Metz.*
1868. *An Account of the Tribes inhabiting the Neilgherries, by J. Shortt, Esq., M.D.; also Hill Ranges of Southern India, Part I.*
1870. *The Aboriginal Tribes of the Neilgherry Hills, by Lieut.-Colonel W. Ross King. Journal of Anthropology, No. 1, July* 1870.

Besides the above, notices may be found in different Literary and Scientific Journals.

Colonel W. Marshall has just published a book called *A Phrenologist among the Todas*.—ED.

3: Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

district of Malabar; on the east by the district of Coimbatore; on the south partly by Coimbatore, and partly by Malabar; and on the west by Malabar.

The Nilagiri plateau is from thirty to forty miles in length, and from ten to twenty-four in breadth. It contains several lofty peaks, the highest of which, Doddabett, is 8,642* feet above the sea.

The altitude of Coonoor is 5,886 feet; that of Ootacamund† 7,416 feet.

The mountains rise very abruptly to two-thirds of their total height, presenting from the plains below almost the aspect of a wall, unbroken by any lower ridges. Their base is covered with a belt of dense jungle, rising to a height of from 2500 to 3500 feet. This is succeeded by an open grassy space, one or two miles wide, nearly destitute of trees. Above this the vegetation is entirely different from that of the jungle below, and the forests assume more the appearance of those found in temperate climates. Along the edge the plateau is, in parts, especially on the western side, very precipitous, broken by wooded ravines, and exceedingly picturesque. The interior of the plateau consists chiefly of grassy undulating hills, divided by narrow valleys, which invariably contain a stream or a swamp. In the hollows of the hillsides nestle small beautiful woods, locally known as *sholas*.‡

It is seldom that so much variety of beauty is found in so small a compass. From the bleak heights of the Kúndahs, with their storm-beaten moss-hung woods and rank coarse grass, to the springy turf and many-coloured *sholas* of Ootacamund, and the tropical vegetation of the western slopes, every five or ten miles brings the traveller to a new climate, and new scenery. Even on the summit of the plateau the rainfall varies with each different aspect, and ranging from about 30 inches to 150 or more, produces a corresponding range of vegetation. It is, however, the views over the edges of the table land that are most singular and striking, from the extreme abruptness of the descent. Let a visitor take a short ride in almost any direction from almost any part of the plateau, and, passing along shady English-looking lanes, sheltered by thickets of blackberry and wild rose; across bare breezy downs, sometimes dotted with twisted, crimson-flowering rhododendron trees, and intersected by swampy valleys, where buffaloes wade and wallow; through dense woods carpeted with rare beautiful ferns and gorgeous in spring tints, beside which the colouring of an English autumn is faint and dull; by native villages, with their patches of cultivation and their magnificent single trees; he will find himself on some ridge or promontory, looking straight down from 4000 to 6000 feet, on a scene that changes like the figures in a kaleidoscope. In the morning a sea of clouds lies at his feet, and gradually rises round him. In the afternoon this has cleared away, and reveals, perhaps, a vast crimson plain, veined by dark lines

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* According to a recent observation made by Colonel Saxton of the Trigonometrical Survey Department.

† Ootacamund, properly Utakamand, is the principal European settlement on the Nilagiris; the others are Coonoor and Kotagherry. There is also a military sanatorium at Wellington. Of late years, Europeans have established themselves in various parts of the district, and opened out plantations of tea, coffee, and cinchona.

The names of the settlements above referred to are spelt according to the mode which long usage has assigned to them. The same course has been pursued in the case of other well-known names, such as Mysore, Coimbatore, &c. According to the system of spelling adopted in the vocabulary, Appendix A., Utakamand, Kúnur, and Kotagiri, would be substituted for Ootacamund, Coonoor, and Kotagherry.

‡ From the Kanarese *chále*, a wood or forest.

4: King G-5 (no date) 1870 AW68 Toda AW60
Badaga AW50

fore, not hesitated to comply with the request made to me, that I would communicate such particulars concerning the hill-tribes of the Nilgiris as came under my own observation during a three years' sojourn on those hills, otherwise known as the Blue Mountains of the Deccan.

It is not necessary here to describe that well-known range further than to observe, for better understanding the situation of the tribes by whom it is inhabited, that it occupies a nearly isolated position, has a superficial extent calculated at between six and seven hundred square miles, and an extreme central altitude of 8,760 feet. Approaching them through the flat parched district of Coimbatoor, the great abruptness with which these mountains rise from the plain adds to their apparent height, and at a distance of many miles the grandeur of the lofty blue line elicits the admiration of the traveller. Arrived at the stifling village of Metapollium, at their base, and near the forest entrance of the ascent by the Coonoor Pass, gazing upwards on their hanging forests, rhododendron-sprinkled heights, and precipitous grey crags, towering almost perpendicularly to a height of 7,000 feet, one may fancy oneself enjoying a glimpse of another world. Notwithstanding the temptation which its lofty verdant summits must have offered to Europeans dwelling on the burning plains below, this range remained, chiefly on account of the then almost impenetrable belt of jungle, abounding in tigers and elephants, and surrounding its base on every side, unexplored till the year 1819, and it was not till two years later that any road was opened up to the summit.

Strange and unknown tribes were then found in possession of this favoured region, a region of green hills and sheltered hollows, of sparkling streams and tracts of primeval forest, with abundant vegetation and delightful climate. Todas and Khotas occupied the higher ranges, while Erulas and Kurumbas clustered here and there in the lower belts on the mountain sides.

These tribes I shall notice in order. Before, however, proceeding to do so, I may render my account plainer by briefly noticing another people who are located on the same ground, and in constant intercourse with the more immediate subjects of our notice, viz., the Vadacas or Badaghas, commonly called Burghers.

Though generally classed among the hill-tribes, they have, comparatively speaking, but recently come among them, having

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

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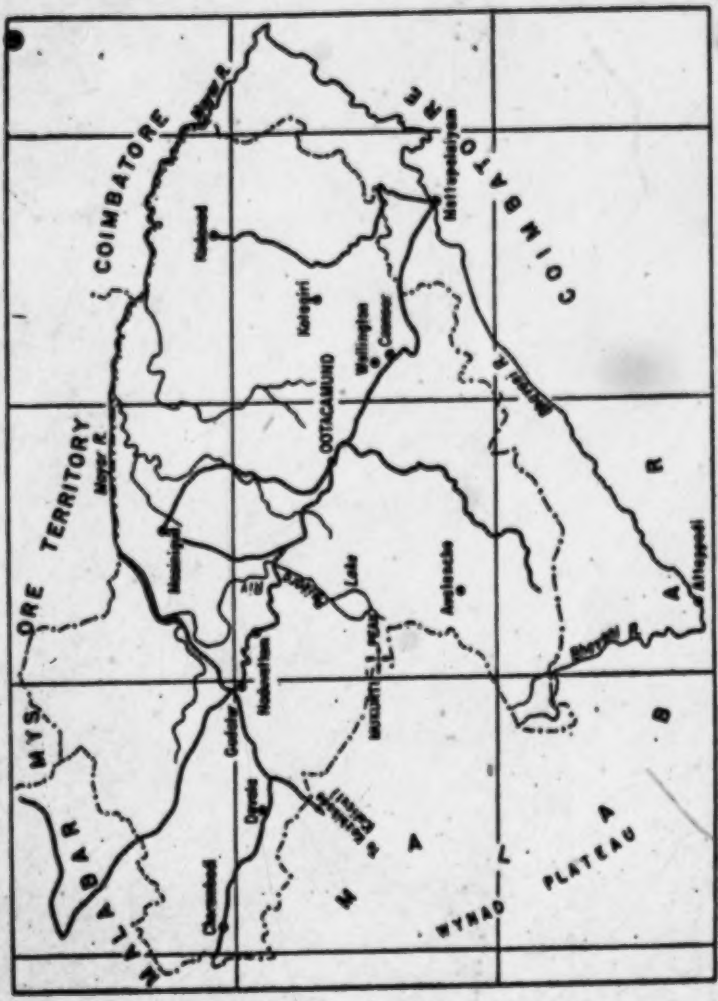

Map III. The Nilgiris. For the Toda *mands*, readers are referred to Rivers, *The Todas* (see Bibliography).

23: Peter E-3 (1938-?) AJ4 W. Tibetans
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is not exactly the same for it is not an institutionalized form of marriage, the way the *tchamadoong* is in Tibet. A monk I met at Spitook, a monastery close to Leh in Ladak, told me that he knew five families with *tchamadoongs* in Gyantse. I have noted their names and hope to be able to study them on the spot.

Toda Polyandry. I shall now try to show how polyandry, as practiced by the Todas, differs radically from the Tibetan system. This is a worth-while consideration, for it shows how polyandry, though it is basically the same organization, can appear in different forms throughout the world.

The Todas are probably the best-known primitive people in the world. Anthropologists mention them repeatedly. They live in the southern Indian hills, called Nilghiris, west of Madras. There are very few of them left, only about 600, and they were very well described by Doctor Rivers at the beginning of this century, though much could still be learned about them, as Rivers admits himself. He made many discoveries, but also made several mistakes. In his book, the chapter on religion tells the amusing story of some investigators who had been there before, who tried to note down the names of the various gods the Todas have in their shrines. One god has a very long name, which, to this author, seemed to be correct, but, as Rivers pointed out in his book, the words that appeared as the "name" really mean, in Toda, "Give me another rupee and I will tell you what this god is called." It is easy to understand what happened. I think that similar progress could be made in the investigation of Toda polyandry, but that Rivers did not go into it completely and sufficiently.

Unfortunately, as I have said, the Todas are a dying-out people, there being only 600 left, of which only about 50 per cent are polyandrous, *i.e.*, a much smaller proportion than among the Tibetans. The Todas are divided into two main clans, a superior leading clan called the Thartars,